

**The Honorable Henry Aquino  
Hawai'i State House of Representatives  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 419/  
Honolulu, Hawai'i**

**Re: HB2658**

Hearing Date: February 9, 2018

Dear Chair Aquino,

We, Taylor Brack and Andres Y. Gonzalez, are second year law students at the William S. Richardson School of Law and have dedicated some time to research this issue. As concerned residents of Hawai'i, we urge to you to support House Bill 2658. This bill will amend HRS § 286-102.6 to exempt COFA migrants from the requirement that the driver's licenses of legal immigrants must expire no later than the immigrant's authorized period of stay in the United States.

This statute, in accordance with The REAL ID Act, was not written with COFA migrants in mind and as a result, the Hawai'i Department of Transportation, erring on the side of caution, has chosen to interpret the existing law in a way that disproportionately impacts COFA migrants in this state. What this means for many COFA drivers is having to return to the DMV in person every year to renew their licenses. Please consider the [story](#) of Kateni Songeni, a Chuuk-born Hawaii resident who returned to the DMV twice before she could renew her license due to excessively long lines, to fully realize the impact that this policy would have on working adults who depend on having valid driver's licenses. In our research, we talked to community organizers and heard directly from many other individuals whose lives are burdened by the requirement to renew every year.

We should do everything possible to ensure fair treatment of our COFA neighbors under the law. Following the example set by the Oregon state legislature, this amendment will relieve COFA migrants of the undue burden placed on them- allowing them the full benefit of living and working as valued members of the community. It will also prevent the DMVs throughout the state from having to expend unnecessary resources to meet what is sure to be an unprecedented and exceedingly high demand.

It has been our privilege to work alongside the Marshallese community here in Oahu. Supporting them in their efforts to cure the injustices they face as migrants in this country has taught me much about the kind of advocate I want to become. I hope that you too can play a part in administering this cure. This bill will be a small, but necessary step in that direction.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Taylor Brack & Andres Y. Gonzalez  
Juris Doctor Candidate, Class of 2019  
William S. Richardson School of Law

**Contact Information:**

Andres Y. Gonzalez / [andresyg@hawaii.edu](mailto:andresyg@hawaii.edu) / 808-600-1730

Taylor Brack / [tbrack@hawaii.edu](mailto:tbrack@hawaii.edu) / 601-927-7904



**HEALTHYPACIFIC.NET**  
[restoringjusticehi@gmail.com](mailto:restoringjusticehi@gmail.com)

**HB2658**  
RELATING TO DRIVER'S LICENSING  
**House Committee on Transportation**

February 9, 2018  
10:00 A.M.  
Conference Room 423

Aloha Mai e Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Quinlan and Members of the House Committee on Transportation

HealthyPacific.Net **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** amendments to our driver's licensing laws, that will allow long-time, legal Hawai'i residents to obtain driver's licenses that appropriately reflect their long-established and indefinite lawful residence here in our islands.

Pacific Islanders legally present under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) have contributed to our communities, work force, and tax base for multiple decades now, and are authorized to live and work in the U.S. for an indefinite period of time. However, due to an oversight in state driver's licensing laws, our COFA residents have been required to renew their drivers licenses every single year, unlike "legal permanent residents" and others similarly authorized to reside here for an indefinite period of time. This has not only caused significant undue hardship to Hawai'i's COFA communities, but represents yet another manifestation of the systemic and at times explicitly invidious racism they must face on a daily basis here in our islands. Notably, other states (such as Oregon) have already recognized and taken action to address this wrongfully disparate treatment of their long-time COFA residents and community members.

Accordingly, HealthyPacific.Net respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** HB2658, and provide parity and equal treatment under the law for Hawai'i's hard-working COFA residents.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to support this measure.



[www.facebook.com/cofacan](http://www.facebook.com/cofacan) ; cofacanha@gmail.com

Representative Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair  
Representative Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair  
Committee on Transportation

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2678, RELATING TO DRIVER'S LICENSING

Friday, February 9, 2018, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 423

Aloha Chair Aquino:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 2658.

This bill would remove systemic barriers that prevent lawful residents from maintaining their driving qualifications. The bill will improve traffic safety by ensuring all legal residents are able to safely drive to attend to work, childcare, family, and community needs.

COFACAN stands for Compact of Free Association Community Advocacy Network, and we represent an ad-hoc network of individuals from the "COFA" nations comprised of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the four Federated States of Micronesia, Yap, Kosrae, Chuuk, and Pohnpei. We encourage civic participation, proactively share and highlight the positive contributions of the Micronesian community, and work for systemic policy changes to further empower COFA diaspora in the state of Hawai'i and the continental United States.

COFACAN **SUPPORTS** HB 2658, which clarifies the status of citizens from the Compact of Free Association for the purposes of obtaining a driver license. Immigrants from the COFA states are lawfully present, and therefore should be eligible to maintain a state driver license qualification for the regular eight year renewal period. Unfortunately, because the current statute does not specifically include information regarding citizens present in the United States under the COFA treaties, individuals lawfully present under these treaties are required to renew their license every year. As such, many individuals—including numerous COFA residents who work as drivers, caregivers, deliveries, and other professions requiring a drivers license—will be required to miss work and waste time in order to remain compliant. This also means that Hawaii faces the prospect of thousands of additional license renewals each year, wasting state resources already stretched by the additional federal requirements. We believe this is an important and critical step to ensuring that all individuals and communities in Hawai'i, regardless of ethnic backgrounds, can live healthy, happy, safe, and productive lives.

COFACAN urges you to please **SUPPORT and PASS HB 2658**



# Family Promise® of Hawai`i

*A Community Response to Homelessness*

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February 8, 2018

Representative Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair of the House Committee on Transportation  
Representative Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair of the House Committee on Transportation

Re: Support for HB2658 relating to Driver's Licensing

Family Promise of Hawaii is a nonprofit organization which provides shelter, case management and housing support for families experiencing homelessness. A large population that our shelter serves are COFA immigrants. Having the appropriate documentation is often a barrier these families face with accessing employment and housing. We support HB2658 as it will help ease the burden of constant license renewal for COFA families.

With Much Aloha,

Samantha Church, MSW  
Executive Director

Dina Shek  
Honolulu, HI 96816  
(808) 734-6316  
*dinasf@gmail.com*

To: Representative Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair  
Representative Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair  
Committee on Transportation

From: Dina Shek

Hearing: Friday, February 9, 2018, 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 423

**RE: Support for H.B. 2658 Relating to Driver's Licensing**

I write in strong support of H.B. 2658, Relating to Driver's Licensing, which would promote equal treatment for Hawaii residents legally present under the Compact of Free Association (COFA). COFA residents have lived, worked, and contributed to Hawaii's community and economy for over three decades, and they should be afforded the same privileges as other Hawaii residents. Imposing a one-year driver's license renewal creates a burdensome and unfair barrier that has very real and disruptive consequences.

The Compact agreement authorizes residents from the COFA nations (Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau) to legally reside in Hawaii for an indefinite period of time. The Compact also allows the United States exclusive military control over their home countries. While they may stay in the U.S. indefinitely, they are not technically considered "permanent residents," and their legal documents do not include a specific end of stay date. Due to these technicalities, they are being required to renew their driver's license every year, rather than the usual eight year renewal period granted to most other residents of Hawaii. H.B. 2658 would correct this unfairness.

The one-year renewal period imposed on Hawaii residents from COFA nations is a tremendous waste of valuable state resources. Recent KHON2 and KHNL news stories report that due to changes in state law, Hawaii residents are now waiting for up to five hours in line to renew their driver's licenses. DMV officials report that the average appointment is taking three times as long as normal due to additional federal documentation requirements. Hawaii has an estimated 15,000 residents with COFA status. If even a few thousand of them carry a Hawaii driver's license, annual renewals for COFA residents will continue to impose a significant strain on an already overburdened DMV.

Each year that goes by without a solution to this problem wastes significant state resources, risks public safety, and disrupts the lives of workers, parents, caregivers, and valued neighbors. For these reasons, **please support the passage of H.B. 2658**. Thank you for your attention and consideration of this important matter.

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/7/2018 10:48:13 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Wayne		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha mai Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Quinlan, and Members of the House Committee on Transportation,

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify in ***STRONG SUPPORT*** of HB2658, which will remove unnecessarily discriminatory barriers to drivers licenses faced by Hawai'i residents lawfully present under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

As you may know, Pacific Islanders legally present under COFA have contributed to our communities, work force, and tax base for multiple decades now, and are authorized to live and work in the U.S. for an indefinite period of time. However, due to an oversight in state drivers licensing laws, our COFA residents have been required to renew their drivers licenses every single year, unlike "lawful permanent residents" and others similarly authorized to reside here for an indefinite period of time. This has not only caused significant undue hardship to our COFA community members, but represents yet another manifestation of the systemic and at times explicitly invidious racism they face on a daily basis here in our islands. Notably, other states, including Oregon, have already recognized and taken action to address this wrongfully disparate treatment of their long-time residents and community members.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure, and ensure that our COFA community members are no longer burdened with the unnecessarily discriminatory policies embodied in our current drivers licensing regulations.

Mahalo nui,

Wayne Tanaka

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 7:29:52 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Randy Compton		Support	No

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT amendments to our driver's licensing laws, that will allow long-time, legal Hawai'i residents to obtain driver's licenses that appropriately reflect their long-established and indefinite lawful residence here in our islands.

Pacific Islanders legally present under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA) have contributed to our communities, work force, and tax base for multiple decades now, and are authorized to live and work in the U.S. for an indefinite period of time. However, due to an oversight in state driver's licensing laws, our COFA residents have been required to renew their drivers licenses every single year, unlike "legal permanent residents" and others similarly authorized to reside here for an indefinite period of time. This has not only caused significant undue hardship to Hawai'i's COFA communities, but represents yet another manifestation of the systemic and at times explicitly invidious racism they must face on a daily basis here in our islands. Notably, other states (such as Oregon) have already recognized and taken action to address this wrongfully disparate treatment of their long-time COFA residents and community members.

Respectfully, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2658, and provide parity and equal treatment under the law for Hawai'i's hard-working COFA residents.

Thank you.

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 8:37:42 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Darlene Rodrigues		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Quinlan, and Members of the House Committee on Transportation,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in ***STRONG SUPPORT*** of HB2658, which will remove unnecessarily discriminatory barriers to drivers licenses faced by Hawai'i residents lawfully present under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

As you may know, Pacific Islanders legally present under COFA have contributed to our communities, work force, and tax base for multiple decades now, and are authorized to live and work in the U.S. for an indefinite period of time. However, state driver's licensing laws require our COFA residents to renew their drivers licenses every single year, unlike "lawful permanent residents" and others similarly authorized to reside here for an indefinite period of time. This has not only caused significant undue hardship to our COFA community members, but represents yet another manifestation of the systemic and at times explicitly invidious racism they face on a daily basis here in our islands. Notably, other states, including Oregon, have already recognized and taken action to address this wrongfully disparate treatment of their long-time residents and community members.

I respectfully ask you to please PASS this measure. Our COFA neighbors should no longer be burdened with the unnecessarily discriminatory policies embodied in our current driver's licensing laws.

Salamat po,

Darlene Rodrigues



**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 9:14:04 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Megan Kiyomi Inada Hagiwara		Support	Yes

Comments:

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 10:19:56 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Tamera Heine		Support	No

Comments:

Iakwe Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Quinlan, and Members of the House Committee on Transportation,

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB2658, which will remove unnecessarily discriminatory barriers to drivers licenses faced by Hawai'i residents lawfully present under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

As you may know, Pacific Islanders legally present under COFA have contributed to our communities, work force, and tax base for multiple decades now, and are authorized to live and work in the U.S. for an indefinite period of time. However, state driver's licensing laws require our COFA residents to renew their drivers licenses every single year, unlike "lawful permanent residents" and others similarly authorized to reside here for an indefinite period of time. This has not only caused significant undue hardship to our COFA community members, but represents yet another manifestation of the systemic and at times explicitly invidious racism they face on a daily basis here in our islands. Notably, other states, including Oregon, have already recognized and taken action to address this wrongfully disparate treatment of their long-time residents and community members.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure, and ensure that our COFA community members are no longer burdened with the unnecessarily discriminatory policies embodied in our current driver's licensing laws.

Kommool tata,

Tamera Heine

February 8, 2018

House Committee on Transportation

Re: Support for HB2658

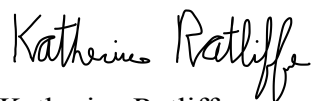
Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Quinlan, and Members of the House Committee on Transportation,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in ***STRONG SUPPORT*** of HB2658, which will remove unnecessary discriminatory barriers to renewing driver's licenses faced by Hawai'i residents who are lawfully present under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

As you may know, Pacific Islanders who are legally present under COFA have contributed to our communities, work force, and tax base for multiple decades, and are authorized to live and work in the U.S. for an indefinite period of time. However, Hawai'i state driver's licensing laws require our COFA residents to renew their driver's licenses every single year, unlike other "lawful permanent residents" and others similarly authorized to reside here for an indefinite period of time. This has not only caused significant undue hardship to our COFA community members, but represents yet another manifestation of the systemic, institutionalized and, at times, explicitly invidious racism they face on a daily basis here in our islands. Notably, other states, including Oregon, have already recognized and taken action to address this wrongful disparate treatment of their long-time residents and community members.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure, and ensure that our COFA community members are no longer burdened with the unnecessary discriminatory policies embodied in our current driver's licensing laws.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Ratliffe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katherine Ratliffe  
Associate Professor  
Department of Educational Psychology  
University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 2:43:12 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ron Balajadia		Support	No

Comments:

I am in Strong Support of HB2658, which will remove unnecessarily discriminatory barriers to drivers licences faced by Hawaii residents lawfully present under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure, and ensure our COFA community members are no longer burdened with the unnecessarily discriminatory policies embodied in our current driver's licensing laws.

Mahalo!

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 2:52:07 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Doris Segal Matsunaga		Support	No

Comments:

Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Quinlan, and Members of the House Committee on Transportation,

I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB2658, which will remove unnecessarily discriminatory barriers to drivers licenses faced by Hawai'i residents lawfully present under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

As you may know, Pacific Islanders legally present under COFA have contributed to our communities, work force, and tax base for multiple decades now, and are authorized to live and work in the U.S. for an indefinite period of time. However, state driver's licensing laws require our COFA residents to renew their drivers licenses every single year, unlike "lawful permanent residents" and others similarly authorized to reside here for an indefinite period of time. This has not only caused significant undue hardship to our COFA community members, but **also presents problems for employers, schools and others**. Notably, other states, including Oregon, have already recognized and taken action to address this wrongfully disparate treatment of their long-time residents and community members.

I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure.

Mahalo.

Doris Segal Matsunaga

Aiea, Hawaii

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 4:17:13 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Marie Iding		Support	No

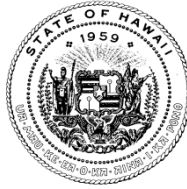
Comments:

Aloha mai Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Quinlan, and Members of the House Committee on Transportation,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in ***STRONG SUPPORT*** of HB2658, which will remove unnecessarily discriminatory barriers to drivers licenses faced by Hawai'i residents lawfully present under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

We need to eradicate such discriminatory policies that create hardships to affected Hawaii residents and are associated with additional costs to the state involved in repeatedly administering driving tests.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure, and ensure that our COFA community members are no longer burdened with the unnecessarily discriminatory policies embodied in our current driver's licensing laws.



**Testimony by:**  
JADE T. BUTAY  
INTERIM DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors  
ROY CATALANI  
ROSS M. HIGASHI  
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN  
DARRELL T. YOUNG

IN REPLY REFER TO:

**LATE**

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

February 9, 2018  
10:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Room 423

**H.B. 2658**  
**RELATING TO DRIVER'S LICENSING**

House Committee on Transportation

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The Department of Transportation **opposes** H.B. 2658 which removes Compact of Free Association (COFA) sovereign states from having to comply with the legal presence requirements imposed on legal immigrants.

The proposed amendment to Section 286-106 (3) is in direct conflict with the REAL ID Act of 2005 (Act). The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has already provided Hawaii guidelines on determining the acceptable expiration date of the driver's license for COFA individuals. The driver's license expiration date must be based on the valid passport and Employment Authorization Card (Form I-766). The Act specifies the required documentation that must be presented as evidence of a person's "lawful status" (legal presence) in the United States.

Failure to comply with the requirements of the Act jeopardizes Hawaii's compliance status with DHS. Losing our compliance status would mean that Hawaii's driver's license would no longer be an accepted form of identification for the purposes of domestic commercial air travel and entrance to Federal facilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**LATE**



# HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411 HONOLULU, HI 96813 · PHONE: 586-8636 FAX: 586-8655 TDD: 568-8692

February 9, 2018  
Rm. 423, 10:00 a.m.

To: The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Transportation

From: Linda Hamilton Krieger, Chair  
and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: H.B. No. 2658

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai‘i’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5.

**The HCRC supports H.B. No. 2658.**

H.B. No. 2658 exempts Hawai‘i residents who are citizens of Compact of Free Association (COFA) nations from the requirement that a legal immigrant’s driver’s license shall expire no later than their authorized stay in the United States.

Under the Compacts of Free Association, we have a special relationship with COFA nations and their citizens, one that developed from a historical trust relationship. Citizens of COFA nations may enter into, work, and establish residence in the United States, but do not have a pathway to U.S. citizenship. These COFA citizens who enter and reside in Hawai‘i under a Compact of Free Association do not have limited authorized stays in the United States. They should be able to get driver’s licenses that expire on their first birthday occurring not less than eight years after the date of issuance, not a shorter duration. This would be fair, helping these COFA Hawai‘i residents avoid unnecessary cost and inconvenience.



**LATE**

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 9:02:33 PM  
Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
david derauf	Kokua Kalihi Valley	Support	No

Comments:

Representative Henry H.C. Aquino, Chair

Representative Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair

Committee on Transportation

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2678, RELATING TO DRIVER’S LICENSING

Friday, Feb 9, 2018, 10:00am, Conference Room 423:

Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Quinlan, and members of the House Committee on Transportation,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in SUPPORT of HB2658.

This bill would remove systemic barriers that prevent lawful residents from maintaining their driving qualifications. More specifically this bill would help ensure that many of the patients at KĀ• kua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services (KKV) are easily able to safely drive to and from work, doctor appointments, and other events.

KKV is a community-organized and operated community health center serving the residents of Kalihi, a federally-designated Medically Underserved Area of 50,000 individuals of mostly Asian & Pacific Island decent. Founded in 1972 by community leaders, KKV’s mission is to “work toward healing, reconciliation and the alleviation of suffering in Kalihi through strong relationships that honor culture and foster health and harmony.”

KKV SUPPORTS HB2658, which clarifies the status of citizens from the Compact of Free Association for the purposes of obtaining a driver license. Immigrants from the COFA states are lawfully present, and therefore should be eligible to maintain a state driver license qualification for longer than one year. Without this provision, many individuals may inadvertently miss the expiration of their license, increasing their stress and jeopardizing their access to essential services such as healthcare coverage, employment, and housing; all of which may negatively impact their health and wellbeing. We believe passing this bill is an important and critical step to ensuring that all individuals and communities in Hawai'i, regardless of ethnic backgrounds, can live healthy, happy, and safe lives.

KKV urges you to please SUPPORT and PASS HB2658

Thank you,

David Derauf, MD, MPH

KĀ• kua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services

Executive Director

Providing Medical & Dental Services, Health Education, Family Planning, Perinatal, WIC and Social Services to

Kalihi Valley residents since 1972. Neighbors being neighborly to neighbors.



## JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

HONOLULU CHAPTER

P.O. BOX 1291, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96807

EMAIL: [jaclhon@gmail.com](mailto:jaclhon@gmail.com) WEBSITE: [www.jaclhonolulu.org](http://www.jaclhonolulu.org)

*Working For A Greater America*

**LATE**

February 8, 2018

### Board Members

Alison Kunishige  
President

To: House Committee Chair Henry J.C. Aquino  
Members of the House Committee on Transportation

Kent Walther  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

From: Alison Kunishige  
President, Japanese American Citizens League – Honolulu Chapter

Jacce Mikulanec  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

Re: SUPPORT OF HB 2658, Relating to Driver's Licensing  
Friday, February 9, 2018  
10:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 423

Liann Ebesugawa  
3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President

Geoff Sogi  
Treasurer

Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee:

Sean Ibara  
Secretary

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) Honolulu Chapter is in strong support of HB 2658. We believe this bill will ensure that long-time, legal Hawaii residents under the Compact of Free Association ("COFA") are protected from unfair and unwarranted government burdens.

Susan Arnett

Della Au Belatti

Alphonso Bragg

Shawn Benton

Bernadette Fo

David Forman

Hana Fulghum

AJ Halagao

Trisha Nakamura

Kenyon Tam

Jamie Yamagata

Founded in 1929, JACL is the nation's oldest and largest Asian Pacific American civil rights organization. Locally our organization works to protect the civil and human rights of all. This work includes Native Hawaiian self-determination, protection of immigrant rights and protection of COFA citizen rights.

### Legal Counsel

Benjamin Kudo

The Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Republic of Palau each have entered into a reparatory agreement with the United States called a Compact of Free Association or COFA Agreement. These compacts grant citizens of those countries authorization to remain in the United States for an unlimited period of time—permanently if they so choose. As such, their immigration documents do not contain a specific end date. Under federal immigration law their status technically is not "permanent resident." Because they are not permanent residents, but have no specified end dates on their documents, they fall into the portion of Hawaii law that limits the validity of their driver license for only one year unlike others who are able to obtain eight-year terms. And while they can renew every year they remain in the U.S., that means many additional trips to the DMV and the accompanying cost for renewal solely because they have chosen to live, work and raise their families in Hawaii. This has not only caused significant undue hardship to Hawai'i's COFA communities, but represents yet another manifestation of the systemic and at times explicit discrimination they often face here in our islands. Notably, other states (such as Oregon) have already recognized and taken action to address this wrongfully disparate treatment of their long-time COFA residents and community members.

### Advisory Council

Allicyn Hikida-Tasaka

Clayton Ikei

William Kaneko

Colbert Matsumoto

Alan Murakami

We urge you to pass HB 2658. Thank you for your time and consideration.



February 8, 2018



Keith Webster  
State President

Napua Amina  
Maui President

Kathleen Jaycox  
Oahu President

Niva Bermudez  
State Treasurer  
& Maui  
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Ala'ilima  
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Representative

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Representative

Thelma Akita-  
Kealoha  
Maui  
Representative

Christy  
MacPherson  
Executive  
Director

Rev. Tasha  
Kama  
Maui Lead  
Organizer

To the members of the House of Representatives Transportation Committee,

Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE) strongly supports HB 2658. Providing COFA migrants with the opportunity to renew their driver's licenses every eight (8) years rather than one (1) year is doing what is equitable and just.

There is absolutely no reason why COFA individuals should have any different treatment than other drivers in our state.

Thank you for your consideration

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 5:53:02 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
chelsea pang		Support	No

Comments:

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 6:56:05 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Diliaur Tellei		Support	No

Comments:

I support this measure. As legal immigrants, COFA citizens should have access to legal forms of identification.

**LATE**

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 9:00:14 PM  
Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cinzia Olter		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha mai Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Quinlan, and Members of the House Committee on Transportation,

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2658, which will remove unnecessarily discriminatory barriers to drivers licenses faced by Hawai'i residents lawfully present under the Compacts of Free Association (COFA).

As you may know, Pacific Islanders legally present under COFA have contributed to our communities, work force, and tax base for multiple decades now, and are authorized to live and work in the U.S. for an indefinite period of time. However, state driver's licensing laws require our COFA residents to renew their drivers licenses every single year,

unlike "lawful permanent residents" and others similarly authorized to reside here for an indefinite period of time. This has not only caused significant undue hardship to our COFA community members, but represents yet another manifestation of the systemic and at times explicitly invidious racism they face on a daily basis here in our islands. Notably, other states, including Oregon, have already recognized and taken action to address this wrongfully disparate treatment of their long-time residents and community members.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS this measure, and ensure that our COFA community members are no longer burdened with the unnecessarily discriminatory policies embodied in our current driver's licensing laws.

Mahalo nui!

**LATE**

**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 9:56:22 PM  
Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Naemi Miyashita		Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for letting me testify that I am for this bill to pass. I strongly agree that if we are allowed to reside and work here we should be able to attain a drivers license with no descriminaron. I love Hawaiiia and have been here since 1987. I'm now married to a American citizen and he works while I drive our little ones and teenager to school and sports and other activities. Due to high costs of school bus transportation and child care we decided that it's better for me to be a stay at home Mom so my husband can work full time to support our family which he does. So it's just a little inconvenient for me to have to go and stand in line for hours just to renew my drivers license every year. But I have to do it so I can leagally drive like every other resident in Hawaii. I really hope you all will put everything into consideration while making a decision. Thank u For your time Mrs.Miyashita.



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**HB-2658**

Submitted on: 2/9/2018 8:47:47 A

Testimony for TRN on 2/9/2018 1

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Margaret Santos	Maui County Immigrant Services	Support	No

Comments:

I am in support of this bill! I work with many COFA migrants on a daily basis and feel that if their passport is still valid or if they have an Employment Authorization Card that is still valid that their Hawaii State Driver License should be valid until the expiration of their valid government issued identification documents. Many of them are employed and losing a day of work/wages each year to renew their driver license is absurd. Please grant these COFA migrants some equality when it comes to renewing their Hawaii State Driver License. Mahalo